

the Government, free from a shilling of expense, in order to devise methods, either at our base in France or at home, for avoiding the egregious and profitless loss to the country of commodities and money obvious to the most vagrant eye. The response was an extensive packet of returns from small shopkeepers whose figures I was required to tabulate—a task which an ordinary school-girl could fairly have undertaken. And I heard no more. It seemed never to occur to the official mind that a waste of specialised energy was a waste of national aid. (3) The expenditure of the Government was profligate, disastrous, and vicious. The effective and unsleeping oversight of disbursements is the foundation of prosperity, character, and the accomplishment of aims. Lavish and unchecked outlay is not only attended by approximate or real ruin and malversation in its particular direction, but also tends to render impotent the achievement of the remaining purposes of a general scheme. Its pernicious effect, again, upon character and provident habit is incalculable. Thrift so profoundly is the basis of social and civic qualities that no nation can fulfil in any just degree a righteous destiny without this ingrained virtue. But how could this habit be cultivated among the people when the Government presented this flagrant example? Where was the force of appealing to the citizens for self-restraint in expenditure when their rates and taxes exacted were so shamefully misspent? And, involving this aspect (and generally) in the people, I would also remark that—with, happily, many notable and laudable exceptions—I sorrowfully observed the large want of earnestness of spirit in men, a failure in the sense of the reality of life and of personal responsibility: qualities which not even the solemn experiences of the war had stimulated into sensitive activity. Too frequently I found that, when the recurrence of Peace was named, people dwelt mainly upon the fulfilment of their individual hopes of benefit or of the expectations of their class. (4) Bearing upon the general question here considered, I advert to the tragic intrusion of industrial strikes, to whomso-

ever due, while the brethren of the workers were in the agony of the fight; and the shameless extraction of a traitorous personal profit, by the execrable miscreants who were termed